Notable Internet Books

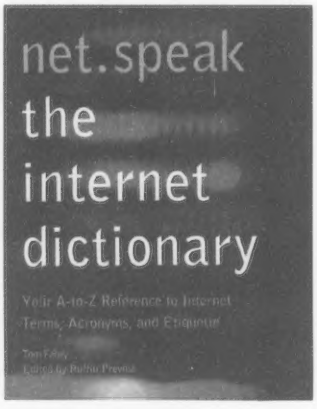
By Kevin M. Savetz

It seems like every week a new Internet book hits the bookstores. With so many choices, what's an online user to do? Kevin Savetz, Internet guru and book writer, offers his top picks in Internet books.

One hundred and sixty books. That's how many books are listed in the **Unofficial Internet Book List**, a bibliography of books that I have compiled about the Internet. It's free to anyone who wants to know about books that have to do with the Internet. But since no one has time to read all of those books, I've gone and picked what I consider to be the best of my list for ONLINE ACCESS.

You've probably already heard of (or read) the "big name" Internet books, like Ed Krol's *Whole Internet User's Guide and Catalog* and Brendan Kehoe's *Zen and the Art of Internet*. So in this article, I will focus on some good books of which you may not have heard.

Here are my picks for notable, but less known, books about the Internet—divided into my own unique categories. Happy reading.



The Alphabet Soup of the Internet

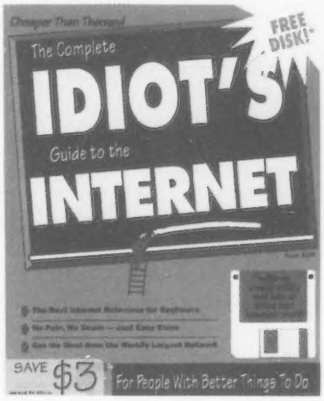
net.speak - the Internet Dictionary
by Tom Fahey
Published by Hayden Books, $12.95
(ISBN: 1-56830-095-6)

If you've ever wondered just what InterNIC is, or what MIME stands for, or the difference between a bridge and a router, pick up ***net.speak - the Internet Dictionary***. This is a dictionary of all things Internet, listing some 2,000 Internet-related phrases, acronyms and jargon. Although the definitions are brief, this book contains a useful mix of tech-speak (like High-Level Data Link Control), common Internet slang (like "spam") and those hard-to-decrypt acronyms (like RTFM, KIS and NIC).

It does a good job of explaining complex issues in a few words, like what the domain name system is and why it's useful. *net.speak* is great for both the rank beginner and experienced Internet traveler. To keep things from getting dull, the book is peppered with cartoons, interesting stories about the 'Net and etiquette tips.

For Those With Low Self-Esteem

The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Internet
by Peter Kent
Published by Alpha Books, $19.95
(ISBN: 1-56761-414-0)



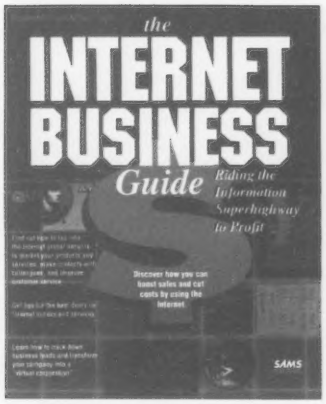
I have an aversion to books that treat the reader like a moron - or, even worse, that assume the reader himself thinks he's a moron. So, ***The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Internet*** sat in my stuff-to-review pile for longer than it should have.

When I finally read it, I discovered that it is actually a handy book for the beginner. It explains in a straightforward way how to get on the Internet, use the basic tools (like UNIX, electronic mail, ftp and archie) and avoid many all-too-common traps.

The Complete Idiot's Guide teaches the Internet as a series of easy steps, focusing on what you really need to know to get a job done rather than exotic details most of us don't have the time or patience for. It also comes with a DOS disk filled with additional reference documents and utilities. All in all, it's lighthearted, non-technical and enjoyable to read.

How to MAKE.MONEY.FAST On the 'Net

The Internet Business Guide: Riding the Information Superhighway to Profit
by Rosalind Resnick and DaveTaylor
Published by Sams Publishing, $25 U.S., $34.95 CAN
(ISBN: 0-672-30530-5)



Suddenly, everyone seems to be a self-proclaimed expert on how to do business on the Internet. A half dozen books on the topic have recently appeared on bookshelves. By far the best one I've seen is ***The Internet Business Guide: Riding the Information Superhighway to Profit.***

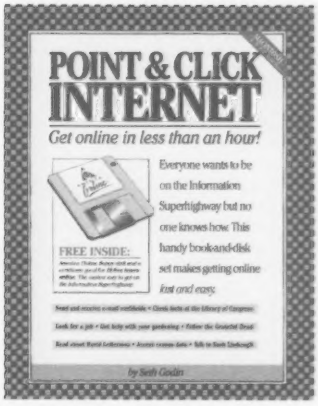
By reading this book, you'll find out how to use the Internet to build market share, track down business leads, communicate with colleagues and search online databases. It makes extensive use of real-life case studies to show how doing business on the 'Net can succeed—and fail.

This book covers aspects of business on the 'Net thoroughly and from unique angles, such as offering cost-effective customer support and exploring the options of setting up an online shop. If you've even thought about using the Internet for your business, read this book first.

Short—But Sweet—Internet Books

Point and Click Internet
by Seth Godin
Published by PeachPit Press, $12.95
(ISBN: 1-56609-161-6)

America Online is one of the few national online services to offer more Internet features than simply electronic mail. AOL offers a unique graphical interface to the Internet, but (as many AOL residents will tell you) using the Internet can still be frustrating. ***Point and Click Internet*** was written with these people in mind. It is a thin volume that shows how to access the Internet using America Online.


POINT & CLICK
INTERNET
Get online in less than an hour!
FREE INSIDE:
Everyone wants to be on the Information Superhighway but no one knows how. This handy book-and-disk set makes getting online fast and easy.
by Seth Godin

Even though AOL doesn't offer full Internet access, *Point and Click Internet* shows how to get the most out of what AOL does offer. It addresses creating electronic mail (including using mailing lists, sending mail to other networks and so on), accessing databases with gopher and reading Usenet newsgroups.

Covering a lot of ground in a mere 100 pages, the book tells how to get help online, how to avoid offending the masses and how to find some interesting mailing lists and databases. A valuable tool for the beginner, *Point and Click Internet* is filled with lots of intriguing, offbeat tidbits. It even includes an AOL starter kit disk so you can get online right away.

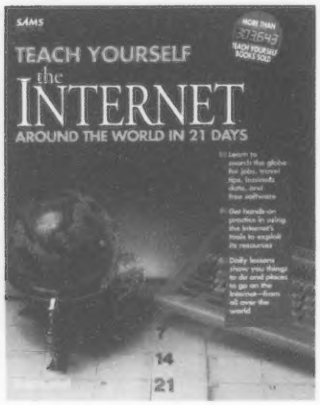
How'd You Do That?

Teach Yourself the Internet–Around the World in 21 Days
by Neil Randall
Published by Sams Publishing, $25
(ISBN: 0-672-30519-4)

Many books about the Internet focus on individual tools: First, they talk about e-mail and what you can do with it. Then, they talk about ftp and what you can do with it.

That approach can work, but that isn't the way many of us learn. We tend to ask questions like "How can I get travel information online?" and "Where can I find job listings on the 'Net?" ***Teach Yourself the Internet - Around the World in 21 Days*** will appeal to those folks, because it's decidedly topic-oriented, not tool-oriented.

The first few chapters cover the obligatory basics of Usenet, e-mail and gopher. But then the book goes on a sort of free-for-all, checking out cool things



online while not being afraid to flit from tool to tool. It doesn't just tell you what you can do, it shows you how to do it.

For instance, if you're interested in reading (or publishing!) an online magazine, this book shows you where to go for the goods on Usenet, in mailing lists and on the World Wide Web. If you're looking for a job, the authors show you not only how to find job listings online, but how to use the 'Net to research prospective employers and find international job sources. It also covers lots of ground in education, art, entertainment and business. Even if you've been on for years, this book will show you corners of the 'Net you've never imagined.

What's All the Fuss About?

Internet Explorer Kit for Macintosh
by Adam Engst and William Dickson
Published by Hayden Books, $29.95
(ISBN: 1-56830-089-1)

Prolific writer Adam Engst is the father of *Internet Starter Kit for Macintosh* and *Internet Starter Kit for Windows*, two of the best Internet books available. His lesser-known book, ***Internet Explorer Kit for Macintosh***, is a sort of forerunner to Engst's other works. The *Explorer Kit* is written for someone who doesn't necessarily want to get on the Internet, but simply

wants to find out what it is everyone is fussing about.

The book is completely non-technical - it doesn't tell you how to get an account, send e-mail or download a file. Instead, it is written as a running commentary between Engst and co-writer William Dickson as they explore some of the most interesting goodies on the Internet. They talk with strangers on the Internet Relay Chat, interjecting comments and explanations of what you're seeing. They discuss and show a variety of online magazines, without getting into the details of how to compose a valid URL.

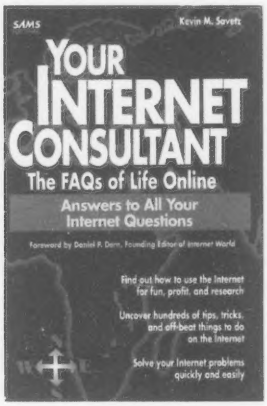
That's pretty much it - they just explore and comment and make bad puns for more than 400 pages. If you're interested in what your spouse is doing on the Internet at 3 a.m., but don't want to know how it works, this is the book for you.

Opportunity for Self-Promotion

Your Internet Consultant - The FAQs of Life Online
by Kevin M. Savetz
Published by Sams Publishing, $25
(ISBN: 0-672-30520-8)

Last but not least, here's an opportunity for me to promote my book. ***Your Internet Consultant - the FAQs of Life Online*** provides simple, enlightening answers to hundreds (361, to be exact) of frequently asked questions about the Internet (as well as answers to a few questions that aren't frequently-asked, but should be). The book is unique because it is arranged in a question-and-answer format, making it simple to find just the information you need.

Your Internet Consultant covers questions asked by users at every level, like "How can I send e-mail to Congress?",


SAMS
Kevin M. Savetz
YOUR
INTERNET
CONSULTANT
The FAQs of Life Online
Answers to All Your Internet Questions
Find out how to use the Internet for fun, profit, and research
Uncover hundreds of tips, tricks, and off-beat things to do on the Internet
Solve your Internet problems quickly and easily

"Where can I find games online?" and "How can I fall in love on the Internet?" I think you'll find the book unique, useful and a little silly. OA

Kevin Savetz, a writer based in Arcata, CA, is the author of Your Internet Consultant the FAQs of Life Online. *You can send him e-mail at* **savetz@ northcoast.com.**

Where To Get the Unofficial Internet Booklist

The Unofficial Internet Booklist file is posted twice monthly to the Usenet newsgroups **alt.internet.services** and **misc.books.technical**

You can also receive it via electronic mail: send e-mail to **mail-server @rtfm.mit.edu** with a message body of " **send usenet/news.answers/ internet-services/book-list.**"